

Kuhl, Bobbie McFee, Barb Wilmeth, Callie Bruce, and Rich Flynn. I would also like to recognize superintendent Tim Hood, business manager Don Krings, maintenance director Gary Briley, and the many individuals involved in the effort to pass the bond referendum.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Creston Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them and wish them a very successful new school year.●

#### FOREST CITY COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Forest City Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Forest City Community School District received several Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$200,000 which it

used for improvements to the fire safety systems in the elementary, middle and high school buildings including fire exits, smoke and heat detectors, strobe lights, emergency lighting and other repairs. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute superintendent Darwin Lehmann, former superintendent Dwight Pierson, the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Forest City Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Susan Shaw, vice president Cynthia Carter, Dave Bartlett, Keila Buffington, Julie Farland, Sandra Lillquist, and Arlyn Midtgaard, and former members Rick Juhl, Laura Oanes, Gary Ludwig, and Deb Lund. District staff who were instrumental in the application and implementation process include Paul Jefson and his maintenance staff.

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#### FORT MADISON COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Fort Madison Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Fort Madison Community School District received several Harkin grants totaling \$1,994,880. The district received three construction grants totaling \$1,444,880 to help with several projects including an addition and renovations to Fort Madison High School to improve English, history and science classrooms, an addition to Richardson Elementary School and improvements at Lincoln Elementary School. These schools are the modern, state-of-the-art facilities that befit the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, they are the kind of schools that every child in America deserves. The district also received five fire safety grants totaling \$550,000 to make improvements in several schools.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Fort Madison Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Peggy Booten, George Wheeler, Judy Gerdes, Duane Sherwood, Don Ward, Denise Gray and Rob Hogan and former board members Dan Davis, Carolyn Smith, John Noller, Martha Wolf, Gary Steflik, Betty Decker, Kitty Garner, Chris Logan, Gary McVey, Linda Fischer, Lori Meierotto and Steve Martin. I would also like to recognize superintendent Dr. Kenneth Marang, former superintendent Linda Brock, former high school principal Bernie Stephenson, Richardson principal Vicky Stephenson, former Lincoln principal Bob Carr and director of facilities and maintenance Kevin Moon.

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